

What type of shampoo is right for you?

Hair is cleansed with shampoo to remove accumulated oils and dirt. Although some shampoos contain a conditioner, it is best to use a conditioner separately after shampooing to restore your hair's pH balance and to ease combing and styling. There are different shampoos for different hair types and conditions. It is best to choose a shampoo that is suited for your hair to get optimal results.

Cleansing shampoos are designed to clean hair and leave it in a good manageable condition. They work well for people with normal to oily hair and also those who wash their hair frequently and don't require much styling. Cleansing shampoo like "Dove+Care" works well for men with fine and thinning hair.

Aromatherapy shampoos bring in a revitalizing aspect to the hair washing process by introducing aromatic oils and scents. They are infused with special oils meant to make hair washing a relaxing experience. Suave shampoos are some example of this.

Conditioning shampoos are designed for dry hair, which is a common problem with people who use chemicals on their hair and style using thermal equipment such as driers, blow dryers or tongs. They contain moisturizing components that restore hydration to the hair. Sun silk or Pantene are the best example of conditioning shampoos.

Color enhancing shampoos contain a small amount of tinted hair dye in addition to the usual shampoo ingredients. Since color-treated hair is prone to dryness, this shampoo has the double duty of ensuring that color doesn't fade out while at the same time moisturizing the hair.

Hydrating and detangling shampoo works well on hair after removal of braids or a weave.

Neutralizing shampoo cleans out the chemical from the hair during a re-touch while normalizing shampoo, also used during a retouch, brings the pH (acidity or alkalinity) of hair back to normal. PH is normally raised by the presence of chemicals in hair.

Medicated shampoo is used under a doctor's prescription to combat dandruff. It acts as antibacterial and antifungal agent, and also treats certain scalp ailments.

There are also shampoos formulated specifically for children. These are mild on their sensitive scalps and will not sting their eyes.

Once you have selected the right shampoo for your hair type, you will need to use it properly to get desired results. You will find the following tips useful.

Lather: The first lather is more to clean your scalp and remove dirt and oil that has accumulated since your last shampoo. Wet your hair then rub a little amount of shampoo between your palms and apply it to your scalp. Using your fingertips, work the shampoo vigorously into your scalp for about 30 seconds. Ensure you scrub around the entire hairline, since dirt and dandruff are most visible there.

Rinse: You should rinse shampoo properly before a second application to ensure all the dirt and oil are completely washed off. If shampoo is left on the hair, the agents in it will continue to react with the scalp making it itchy and dry. They will also encourage hair cuticles to remain open and this will result in moisture loss. Thirty seconds is the recommended time you should take to rinse hair effectively. Work your fingertips through your hair while rinsing to untangle any knots.

Repeat lather and rinse: Repeat the lather and rinse process for as many times as it will take for your hair to be completely clean. The time and amount of shampoo you use will depend on the length, density and state of your hair. If your hair is very dirty, the first round of shampooing will not produce much lather. As a rule of thumb, the faster you hair lathers, the cleaner it is. Also, longer and thick hair requires more time to shampoo.

Dos and don'ts

Do not shampoo hair everyday as this dries out the hair and scalp.

Do not use very hot water to rinse hair, as it also dries out the hair and scalp. Warm or cold water is recommended.

Use cold water for the final rinse as it helps close the pores in the hair shaft. This promotes shinier hair and prevents frizzing.

Fingernails should not be used to scrub hair as you may scratch your scalp and break the skin, which may lead to infection. Use the pads on your fingertips instead.